



U.S. Embassy Damascus

Public Affairs Section Highlights, March 2011

Opening of the Fulbright and Humphrey Application Season

To open the Fulbright and Humphrey Program application season, PD started a series of informational sessions on March 15 at the American Language Center. The Cultural Affairs Officer and Cultural Affairs Specialists discussed various aspects of the programs, concentrating on the Fulbright Foreign Student Program for Master's Degree study and the Fulbright Science and Technology Award for Ph.D. study, and then answered the questions by the 25 Syrian undergraduate and graduate students who attended the event. The students were excited about the possibility of studying in the U.S. and applying to the Fulbright program.



Dinner Event for SCP "Cancer on the Frontline" Participants

PD held a dinner event for participants in the exchange program "Cancer on the Frontline" which took place in late 2010. The participants highlighted the ideas they came back with from the U.S. – to further develop their cancer treatment center for children in Syria and to share their broader view of American culture they had acquired. They especially appreciated the efforts post had made to ensure that they visited key U.S. cancer research and treatment centers such as St. Jude's. They also spoke of the network of connections they were able to make in the U.S. with doctors, nurses, and therapists, with whom they hope to keep in contact.



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Chris Byars Jazz Quartet

The Cultural Section hosted the visit of the Chris Byars Jazz Quartet to Syria from March 17-22. The band gave a public performance at the Arab Cultural Center in Sweida, a town south of Damascus on March 17. Earlier the same day, the band had given a concert at a retirement home in Damascus.



On March 19, the band gave a two-hour workshop at the Arab International University for the Music Club students. The workshop was followed by a concert. Students were energized to work with the first American band to visit their university.



On March 21, the band gave a concert at the Safir Hotel in Homs as part of the Al-Rajaa Association annual bazaar. Later that day, the group performed at the Antique Hall of the Greek Orthodox Archbishopric of Homs. The concert was opened by the U.S. Ambassador and the Governor of Homs. Following the concert His Eminence the Bishop of the Greek Orthodox Church held an official dinner in honor of the Ambassador and the band.